In 2006 and 2007, 650 pilots were trained by various airlines. These include 543 by National Aviation Company of India, 38 by Jet Airways, 27 by Kingfisher Airlines, 32 by Indigo.

Removal of fuel surcharge

724. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the aviation fuel prices are falling and are now at levels seen in September 2005;

(b) if so, whether Government would prevail upon the domestic airlines companies to eliminate fuel surcharge on tickets to pass on the benefit to travellers; and

(c) whether Government has convened a meeting of the CEOs of all domestic airlines to discuss removal of fuel surcharge?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir. In January 2009, average Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) price is almost at par with average ATF price of financial year 2005-06.

(b) Domestic Airlines have reduced the fuel surcharge in the range of Rs.200/- to 400/-. Further, JetLite, Spicejet, Go Air and IndiGo have abolished the congestion charge.

(c) No, Sir.

Cargo handling at Chennai Airport

725. SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Chennai Airport is facing the risk of losing its cargo business for lack of infrastructure at its air cargo complex;

(b) whether cargo import at Chennai airport now touches around 12000 tones, where as it has the infrastructure to handle only 4000 tones which was the earlier monthly average; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) The import cargo touched 10,000 metric tons per month during April to November, 2008. Chennai airport has adequate infrastructure to handle 1,25,000 metric tons of import cargo per annum. In the XIth Plan, Airports Authority of India has worked out capacity expansion to handle 2,50,000 metric tons of import cargo against the demand of 1,86,000 metric tons.

FDI in domestic carriers

726. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has decided to permit foreign airlines to invest upto 25 per cent in domestic airlines;

(b) if so, the reasons for increasing Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in aviation sector when the "Vision 2020" document is already under the consideration of the Group of Ministers (GoM);

(c) whether it is a fact that after 26/11 Mumbai terror attack, bringing FDI in domestic carriers would be a security threat or risk;

(d) if so, whether Ministry of Home Affairs has cleared the proposal; and

(e) if not, the reasons for bringing such a proposal without having been considered by GoM and Home Affairs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (e) The proposal to allow foreign airlines to invest in domestic airline is under examination.

Relaxation in FDI norms

727. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had relaxed the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) norms for civil aviation in the recent past;

(b) if so, the benefits accrued to Government as a result thereof;

(c) whether the private airlines have been benefited more than the national airlines; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by Government to ensure that national airlines are not at loss?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Rail and road connectivity to metro airports

728. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether hue and cry raised over the connectivity of new Bangalore and Hyderabad airports has set to have positive spin-offs for 10 major airports across the country including those of the two silicon cities;

(b) if so, whether the Centre has got into the act to ensure proper road and rail based connectivity to the new and existing airports at the four metros and also at Bangalore, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Kochi, Coimbatore and Pune;

(c) if so, what extent the project has been completed; and

(d) to what extent it has been helpful to these States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (d) Issue of city side connectivity of airport pertains to State Governments/ local authorities.